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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Letter dated 19 April 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith*, a letter, dated 18 April 1999, from His Excellency Zivadin Jovanovic, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, concerning the ecological catastrophe caused by the NATO bombing. I would like to ask you to have it circulated as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda items 10 and 17 (d).

(Signed) Branko BRANKOVIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* The annex is reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

GE.99-13357 (E)

18 April 1999

Excellency,

I would like to warn you and the United Nations Security Council on behalf of the Yugoslav Government and Yugoslav peoples that the several-weeks long aggression by NATO forces against the FR of Yugoslavia, aside from unforeseeable civilian casualties and destruction, already provoked an ecological catastrophe, endangering thus lives of millions of citizens of Yugoslavia, neighboring countries and Europe.

Daily deliberate destruction of plants of chemical, oil and pharmaceutical industry by the NATO aggressors, carried out in the vicinity of large cities, such as the two-million populated Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pristina, Pancevo, Subotica, Smederevo, Cacak, Krusevac, brings about the emission of huge quantities of poisonous substances, endangering thus the lives of people, contaminating the air, soil, the entire living world. The most recent example is tonight's bombing of chemical plants in Belgrade, Pancevo, Novi Sad, which caused the spill-over of large quantities of ammonia, oil, the combustion of reserves of chemicals used for the production of plastics and artificial fertilizers, and created large clouds of poisonous gases that covered the skies of these cities and their environs.

Thousands of citizens of Yugoslavia have been compelled over the past few days to seek medical help due to poisoning by hazardous gases that were emitted in the course of the bombing of chemical plants in Yugoslavia. This is yet another example of crimes against humanity caused by the NATO aggressors. Risks of numerous consequences are still being examined.

Previous bombings of oil refineries in Novi Sad, Belgrade and Pancevo provoked an oil stain on the Danube river, long about 15 kilometers and large 400 meters, which endangered the flora and fauna of this European and Black Sea economic, tourist and ecological river artery.

Are endangered the important European rivers - the Danube and the Sava, as well as the Black Sea, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean.

His Excellency
Mr. Vladimir PETROVSKY
Director General
UN Office in Geneva
G e n e v a

NATO aggressors also attacked national parks on the mountains Kopaonik, Tara, Durmitor, Zlatibor, Divcibare, Crni Vrh. Civilian facilities on many others were destroyed and numerous forest fires caused by the bombing lastingly endangered the unique ecological system in this part of Europe.

The bombing of facilities situated at the seaside and the spill-over of dangerous substances particularly endanger the waters and shores of the Adriatic Sea including the Skadar Lake situated at the border between Yugoslavia and Albania.

It is particularly worrisome that the NATO aggressors over the past few days sent the A-10 planes which use ammunition with depleted uranium. According to results provided by the British laboratory "Coghill", it was established that this ammunition had caused the "Gulf syndrome", leukaemia and anomalies with the new-borns.

Combustion and exhaust gases after more than 6000 take-offs of NATO planes from bases and air-carries in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean and more than 10.000 of explosives of enormous destruction power that the NATO aggressors used in the course of the ongoing aggression against the FRY, endanger the ozone layer, bring about lasting contamination of the soil, cultivable areas and waterways, and cause unforeseeable and lasting damage to the entire population, including the flora and fauna not only in Yugoslavia, but as well in South-Eastern Europe and in the entire Mediterranean basin.

With the expansion of the aggression by ever more frequent throwing bombs on territories of neighboring countries - Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy (the Garda lake) - are growing risks of endangering plants that represent a danger for the ecology on a wider European plan.

I am addressing you, Excellency, in the expectation that you will take, as soon as possible, all the necessary measures within your competence in order to stop immediately the NATO aggression, preventing thus even more serious ecological consequences for the larger region of Europe and the Mediterranean, having in mind particularly the protection of peoples, air, water, food, forests and national parks.

Expecting appropriate engagement of the UN and its agencies, in particular the UNEP in line with the "Agenda 2000" from Rio de Janeiro.

Respectfully yours,
Zivadin Jovanovic
(signed)

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